

## Assessment of Socio-Economic and Sexual Vulnerability of Tea Workers in Bangladesh

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### Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to explore and explain the dynamics of a sexual vulnerability of female tea garden workers in Bangladesh. A quantitative oriented qualitative mixed method has been applied to this study. The study reveals that nearly 52% of the respondents are tortured or harassed in the garden and among them, 26% of the tortured respondents have convicted Tila babu. Only 26% of the total respondents have slight radio exposure. And surprisingly 1% of the respondents hear radio less than once a week. Many new issues are found in this research such as 5% of the respondents watch TV less than once a week. Marxist feminist theory and feminist political activist theory have been consulted to explore the concerned issues such as a women's right to bodily integrity and autonomy for protection from domestic violence, sexual harassment, and rape as well as workplace rights. Marxist thinkers indicate that all exploitations domination is occurred because of class inequality and class discrimination. Because Marxist theory has little room for issues dealing directly with women's reproductive and sexual concerns, many Marxist feminists initially focused on women's work-related concerns. The study suggests that law enforcement should be strengthened through giving punishment of convicted persons of tea garden authorities through introducing an inter tea garden's Investigation Commission and increasing accessibility of NGOs.

**Keywords:** Socio-economic; Vulnerability; Tea worker; Most; Treasured; Tourist; Attraction.



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### 1. Introduction

Tea, the second most popular beverage in the world, is believed to have first been popularized in China. For thousands of years the Chinese farmers had the monopoly of cultivating tea. Its cultivation in the tropical and subtropical areas is a recent phenomenon. Tea plantation in India's Assam dates back to 1839 (Ahmad *et al.*, 2015). The first experimental tea garden in our parts was established in Chittagong in 1840 and the first commercial-scale tea garden in Bangladesh was established in 1854 (Ahmad *et al.*, 2015). Since then the tea industry has been through quite a few historical upheavals—notable among them are the Partition of India in 1947 and the Independence War in 1971. Through these historical changes, the ownership of tea gardens established by the British companies on the abundantly available forest or government land has changed hands (Ahammed, 2012). Bangladesh has 163 tea gardens (including seven in Panchagarh where tea cultivation started only recently) with 36 of them considered “sick”. One unique feature of the tea industry is that the entire land mass (115,000 ha excluding Panchagarh) granted for production of tea is government land. It is also for the colonial legacy that our tea gardens are huge in size and the managements administer the gardens with the air of British Shahib and Zamindars. The use of grant areas for tea with 45% actually used for production of tea is another key concern (Islam *et al.*, 2005). Land granted for tea cultivation but used for other commercial purposes is deemed unjust and an incentive for social injustice perpetrated on the tea plantation workers (Biggs *et al.*, 2018). The most striking fact about tea production in Bangladesh is that after the partition of India most of the tea produced here used to be consumed by West Pakistan. After Independence, Pakistan remains to be the largest importer of Bangladeshi tea. However, now it is we who consume most of the tea that we produce. In 2007 Bangladesh produced 57.9 million KGs of tea 01 which only 10.6 million KGs were exported (Ahammed, 2012). There is an apprehension that if the reduction of tea does not increase significantly and

if domestic consumption continues to grow fast, Bangladesh will soon become an importer of tea. The bottom line is tea is no more an important export commodity and Bangladesh plays no significant role in the global tea trade although it ranked 10th among the tea-producing countries in 2007. Workers are necessary in every stage of tea production, consumption and trade. The tea industry is very different from other industries. The production process of tea involves agriculture and industry. What is unique about labor distribution in these two areas is that the maximum of the labor force is engaged in agriculture—the tea gardens or the field. The labor force that keeps the tea industry alive is not local. The British companies brought them from Bihar, Madras, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and other places in India to work in the tea gardens in Sylhet region (Kadavil, 2007). The Misfortune of these indentured laborers started with their journey to the tea gardens. According to one account, in the early years, a third of the tea plantation workers died during their long journey to the tea gardens and due to the tough work and living condition. Upon arrival to the tea gardens these laborers got a new identity, coolie and were turned into property of the tea companies. These coolies belonging to many identities cleared jungles, planted and tended tea seeds and saplings, planted shade trees, and built luxurious bungalows for tea planters. But they had their destiny tied to their huts in the “labor lines” that they built themselves (Islam, 2012).

The tea communities are one of the most vulnerable people of Bangladesh (Hossain *et al.*, 2017). They deserve special attention of the State, not just equal treatment. But unfortunately, they continue to remain socially excluded, low-paid, overwhelmingly illiterate, deprived and disconnected. They have also lost their original languages in most part, culture, history, education, knowledge and unity (Mahmud *et al.*, 2017). In the labor lines of a tea estate, they seem to be living in island which is isolated from the majority Bengali community who sometimes treat them as untouchables (Kamruzzaman *et al.*, 2015). Without fertilization of minds, they have lost dignity in their lives. These are perfect conditions for the profiteers from the tea industry to continue exploitation of the tea workers. Deprived, exploited and alienated, the majority of the tea workers live an inhuman life (Chakma and Maitrot, 2016). This study has been conducted on the most isolated areas of Habiganj gardens of Bangladesh (Islam, 2012). Each single female and male labour tortured by authority have been interviewed for connecting primary data. Health related behavioral aspects of the concerned respondents would be explained using quantitative data. For this, three hypotheses are formulated reviewing related literatures and deducing from few theoretical frameworks which is the first in its nature in Bangladesh. The hypotheses are (a) lack of self-awareness increases muss exploitation among tea garden workers; (b) hegemonial attitude makes a confined risky environment especially for female tea workers; and (c) sexual vulnerability is more likely related with less protest or taking action. Therefore, the findings of this study would be helpful not only to academicians but to the policy planners and development workers. This study is about to explore the tea community’s sexual vulnerability to basic rights violation related deprivation. Given the geo-socio-economic context of tea estate, the deprivation of education and wage discriminations put tea communities entirely at risk. These communities are considered more vulnerable to oppression than communities living in other parts of the country. This vulnerability is also socially constructed—it arises out of the social and economic circumstances of everyday living (Alam *et al.*, 2017). Previous Bangladeshi studies have only concentrated on the socio-economic consequences of discrimination, community-based ignorance strategies, degree of producing tea and individual coping mechanism during social harassment and so on Hossain *et al.* (2017). The dynamics of sexual vulnerability to exploitation as a result of masculinity hegemony in conjunction with the pre-existing socio-economic and geographical exploitation of the tea communities have always been overlooked. Very few studies have been conducted with detailed focus of the dynamics of the sexual vulnerability of the tea communities. Thus, it is imperative to find out the factors that affect individual’s vulnerability to basic rights violation in the context of hegemonic exploitation. In this context, this study is a modest endeavor to explore the coping strategies, the risk of HIV/AIDS the community face for a long time. The main objective of the study is to explore and explain the dynamics of the sexual vulnerabilities of tea communities faces due to hegemonial attitudes of tea garden authorities in Bangladesh. The study also explores the socio-economic discriminations, dynamics of sexual torture of the female tea workers, the socio-economic and cultural factors of sexual harassment, HIV/AIDS vulnerability and coping strategies for sustainability.

## 2. Theoretical Framework of the Study

### 2.1. Feminism

Feminism comprises a number of social, cultural and political movements, theories and concerned with gender inequalities and equal rights for women. According to some, the history of feminism consists of three waves. The first wave was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the second was in the 1960s and 1970s, and the third extends from the 1990s to the present. Feminist Theory developed from the feminist movement. It takes a number of forms in a variety of disciplines such as feminist geography, feminist history and feminist literary criticism (Butler, 1990). Feminism has altered aspects of western society, ranging from culture to law. Feminist political activists have been concerned with issues such as a woman’s right of contract and property, a woman’s right to bodily integrity and autonomy (especially on matters such as reproductive rights, including the right to abortion, access to contraception and quality prenatal care); for protection from domestic violence against sexual harassment and for workplace rights, including maternity leave and equal pay; and against other forms of discrimination (Collins, 2000). Throughout much of its history, most of the leaders of feminist social and political movements, as well as many feminist theorists, have been predominantly middle-class white women from Western Europe and North America. However, at least since Sojourner Truth’s 1851 speech to US Feminists, women of other races have proposed alternative feminisms. This trend accelerated in the 1960s with the Civil Rights movement in the United States and the collapse of European colonialism in Africa, the Caribbean, parts of Latin America and Southeast Asia. Since that time,

women in former European colonies and the Third World have proposed alternative “post-colonial” and “Third World” feminisms as well. Some Postcolonial feminists, such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty, are critical of Western feminism for being ethnocentric. Black feminists, such as Angela Davis and Alice Walker, share this view (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Since the 1980s, standpoint feminists have argued that the feminist movement should address global issues (such as rape, incest, and prostitution) and culturally specific issues (such as female genital mutilation in some parts of Africa and the Middle East and glass ceiling practices that impede women’s advancement in developed economies) in order to understand how gender inequality interacts with racism, homophobia, classism and colonization in a “matrix of domination”. Other feminists have argued that gendered and sexed identities, such as “man” and “woman”, are social constructs meaning that some gender roles are socially conditioned rather than innate (Connell, 1987).

## 2.2. Feminist Theory

Feminist theory is an extension of feminism into theoretical or philosophical fields. It encompasses work in a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, economics, women’s studies, literary criticism, art history, psychoanalysis and philosophy. Feminist theory aims to understand gender inequality and focuses on gender politics, power relations, and sexuality. While providing a critique of these social and political relations, much of feminist theory also focuses on the promotion of women’s rights and interests. Themes explored in feminist theory include discrimination, stereotyping, objectification (especially sexual objectification), oppression, and patriarchy (Collins, 2000).

### 2.2.1. Black Feminism

Black feminism argues that sexism, class oppression, and racism are inextricably bound together. Forms of feminism that strive to overcome sexism and oppression but ignore race can discriminate against many people, including women, through racial bias. Black feminists argue that the liberation of black women entails freedom for all people, since it would require the end of racism, sexism, and class oppression. One of the theories that evolved out of this movement was Alice Walker’s Womanism (Davis, 1983). It emerged after the early feminist movements that were led specifically by white women who advocated social changes such as woman’s suffrage. These movements were largely white middle-class movements and ignored oppression based on racism and classism. Angela Davis was one of the first people who articulated an argument centered around the intersection of race, gender, and class in her book, *Women-Race, and Class*. Kimberle Crenshaw, a prominent feminist law theorist, gave the idea a name while discussing identity politics in her essay, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence against Women of Color” (Collins, 2000).

### 2.2.2. Marxist Feminist’s Theory

Marxist feminism connects the oppression of women to Marxist ideas about exploitation, oppression and labor. Marxist feminists see women as being held down as a result of their unequal standing in both the workplace and the domestic sphere. Prostitution, domestic work, childcare, and marriage are all seen as ways in which women are exploited by a patriarchal system which devalues women and the substantial work that they do. Marxist feminists focus their energies on broad change that affects society as a whole, and not just on an individual basis. They see the need to work alongside not just men, but all other groups, as they see the oppression of women as a part of a larger pattern that affects everyone involved in the capitalist system (Davis, 1983). Marx felt that when class oppression was overcome, gender oppression would vanish as well. According to socialist feminists, this view of gender oppression as a sub-class of class oppression is naive and much of the work of socialist feminists has gone towards separating gender phenomena from class phenomena. Some contributors to socialist feminism have criticized these traditional Marxist ideas for being largely silent on gender oppression except to subsume it underneath broader class oppression. Other socialist feminists, notably two long-lived American organizations Radical Women and the Freedom Socialist Party, point to the classic Marxist writings of Frederick Engels and August Bebel as a powerful explanation of the link between gender oppression and class exploitation (Butler, 1990). In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century both Clara Zetkin and Eleanor Marx were against the demonization of men and supported a proletarian revolution that would overcome as many male-female inequalities as possible. In his introduction to Marx and Engels, Richard Schmitt insisted the statement “Human beings create themselves” is not to be read as “Men and women, individually, make themselves what they are” but instead as “Men and women, through production, collectively create a society that, in turn, shapes them.” This emphasizes on the collective accounts for the Marxist view of history (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). For the liberal, the ideas, thoughts, and values of individuals account for change over time. For the Marxist, material forces—the production and reproduction of social life—are the prime movers in history. In the course of articulating this doctrine of how change takes place over time, a doctrine usually termed historical materialism, Marx stated, “The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political, and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness”. In other words, Marx believed a society’s mode of production—that is, its forces of production (the raw materials, tools, and workers that actually produce goods) plus its relations of production (the ways in which the production process is organized)—generates a superstructure (a layer of legal, political, and social ideas) that in turn holsters the mode of production. So, for example, Americans think in certain characteristic ways about liberty, equality, and freedom because their mode of production is capitalist (Butler, 1993). Like Marxists in general, Marxist feminists believe social existence determines consciousness. The comment that “women’s work is never done” is, for Marxist feminists, more than an

aphorism; it is a description of the nature of woman's work. Always on call, a woman forms a conception of herself that she would not have if her role in the family and at the workplace did not keep her socially and economically subordinate to men. Thus, Marxist feminists believe in order to understand why women are oppressed in ways men are not, we need to analyze the links between women's work status and women's self-image (Butler, 1993).

### 2.2.3. Comparable Worth

In recent years many Marxist feminists have become less interested in how the sexual division of labor operates in the household and more interested in how it functions in the workplace. As these thinkers see it, when a woman enters public industry, she tends to do women's work there: teaching, nursing, clerking, cooking, sewing, and the like. Moreover, as in the household, this work is undervalued. Angered that women often receive two-thirds of the money men receive for comparable work, many Marxist feminists have become active in the so-called comparable-worth movement (Shaw, 2016). In their estimation, this movement is an opportunity not only to secure better wages for women but also to force society to reconsider why it pays some people so much and others so little. Women in the 1990s earned just sixty-nine cents for every dollar man earned; this situation, though somewhat improved, has not changed much since the 1960s, when women earned about sixty-four cents for every dollar man earned. Even when this wage differential is adjusted for such factors as educational preparation, work experience, or labor force commitment, at least half of the gap between male and female wages goes unexplained (Butler, 1990). Many social scientists attribute the gender gap in wages to job segregation according to sex (Nobis, 2005).

### 2.2.4. Contemporary Socialist Feminism

Socialist feminism is largely the result of Marxist feminists' dissatisfaction with the essentially gender-blind character of Marxist thought, with the tendency of Marxist to regard women's oppression as far less important than worker's oppression (McLaughlin, 2003). Marxists assume that what women suffer at the hands of men is small compared to what the proletariat suffers at the hands of the bourgeoisie. Thus, women must wait for their turn to be liberated (Sarioğlu, 2016). Although many Marxist feminists have waited for women's turn, some have been impatient. Clara Zetkin, one of Lenin's corevolutionaries, provides a case in point. Indeed, Marxist feminists remember Lenin unfavorably largely because he berated Zetkin for encouraging women members of the Communist Party to discuss sexual issues (Herzog, 2007). From Lenin's point of view, Zetkin focused on trivial matters, catering to women's self-indulgent tendencies, when she should have been working to raise their revolutionary consciousness. But as Zetkin saw it, there was a real need for women to understand the form oppression takes in the "private" as well as "public" domain. Convinced Zetkin understood the nature of women's oppression better than Lenin, contemporary socialist feminists stress that although Marxist feminists explained how and why capitalism caused the separation of the workplace from the homestead, they failed to explain why capitalism assigned women to the homestead and men to the workplace in the first place (Easteal and Judd, 2008). To overcome what they perceive as the limitations of traditional Marxist feminist thought, socialist feminists seek to explain the ways in which capitalism interacts with patriarchy to oppress women more egregiously than men (Glass, 1988). Although socialist feminists agree with Marxist feminists that women's liberation depends on the overthrow of capitalism, they claim that capitalism cannot be destroyed unless patriarchy is destroyed and that people's material, or economic, relations cannot change unless their ideologies are also changed. Women must fight two wars, not one, in order to be liberated from the force of oppression (Collins, 2000).

#### 2.2.4.1. Iris Young's Theory

According to Iris Young, so long as socialist feminists try to use "class" as their central category of analysis, they will not be able to explain why women in socialist countries are no less oppressed than women in capitalist countries (McDonald *et al.*, 2011). Because class is a gender-blind category, it is not adequate for the analysis of women's specific oppression in Young's estimation. Thus, Young suggested only a gender-sighted category such as "division of labor" has the conceptual power to transform Marxist feminist theory into a socialist feminist theory able to discuss women's entire estate—that women's position in the family as well as the workplace, women's reproductive and sexual roles as well as women's productive roles (McLaughlin, 2003). Because she believed that capitalism and patriarchy are necessarily linked, Young insisted that a division-of-labor analysis is a total substitute for, not a mere supplement to, class analysis. We do not need one theory (Marxism) to explain gender-neutral capitalism and another theory (feminism) to explain gender-biased patriarchy rather we need a single theory—a socialist feminist theory—to explain gender-biased capitalist patriarchy.

#### 2.2.4.2. Alison Jaggar's Explanation

Like Young, Alison Jaggar advanced a concept other than class as the quintessential Marxist concept. In her book *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, Jaggar identified "alienation" as a concept powerful enough to accommodate the main insights of Marxist, radical, and even liberal feminist thought (Nobis, 2005). Jaggar noted that Marx considered work the humanizing activity par excellence; it is meant to connect human beings to the products of their minds and bodies, nature, and other people. Under capitalism, however, work becomes a dehumanizing activity. Labor is organized in ways that put human beings at odds with everything and everyone, including them. Rejecting the traditional Marxist doctrine that a person has to participate directly in the capitalist relations of production in order to be considered truly alienated, Jaggar claimed not only non-wage-earning women can be alienated but also that wage earning women experience alienation in different ways than wage-earning men do. Alienation, insisted Jaggar, is a gender-mediated experience (Butler, 1990).

### 2.3. Hegemonic Masculinity

Hegemonic masculinity asserts itself in most situations, instilling certain ideas in men, causing them to try to achieve hegemonic masculinity by any means necessary. Ultimately, men are looking for the validation of another man. They wish to be recognized as masculine and that they have achieved hegemonic masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). In contemporary America, hegemonic masculinity is defined by physical strength and bravado, exclusive heterosexuality, suppression of “vulnerable” emotions such as remorse and uncertainty, economic independence, authority over women and other men, and intense interest in sexual ‘conquest’. While most men do not embody all of these qualities, society supports hegemonic masculinity within all its institutions, including the pop culture. Standards of masculinity vary from time to time, from culture to culture. However, masculinity always defines itself as different from and superior to femininity. Against this backdrop, femininity is constructed around adaptation to male power. Its central feature is attractiveness to men, which includes physical appearance, ego-massaging, suppression of “power” emotions such as anger, nurturance of children, exclusive heterosexuality, sexual availability without sexual assertiveness, and sociability (“Men like women who smile.”). One could say that masculinity and femininity are societal euphemisms for male dominance and female subordination. However, hegemonic masculinity and subordinate femininity are not conspiracies. Rather, they are the result of widely accepted ways of thinking that define male dominance as fair, reasonable, and in the best interests of society. John Gray’s works shamelessly play on this theme. He also believes masculinity means male dominance, as shown by his statement, “Rather than continuing to do masculine things like make decisions, initiate sex, and solve problems for her” (Connell, 1987). Dominant groups do not always use violence to stave off challenges by subordinates. The dominant group may make superficial changes to accommodate the demands of marginalized groups, but in essence, it is working to hold on to its privileges. That’s one of the “techniques” for keeping hegemony in place. The dominant group will adjust its relationship but not reform it.

### 2.4. Sex Role Theory

According to sex role theory, men are aggressive, rational, dominant, and objective or in Gray’s atomy, Martians value “power, competency, efficiency, and achievement”. Women are passive, intuitive, submissive, and subjective. Or rather, Venetians value “love, communication, beauty, and relationships.” Sex-role theory implicitly assumes that our culture values the characteristics of each sex equally and that they complement each other in a balanced way (Davis, 1983). Women are just as esteemed for their passivity as men for their aggressiveness. Sex-role advocates will admit these traits have their limitations. However, they always assure us that in the final analysis, conforming to our roles will bring glad harmony between the sexes (Easteal and Judd, 2008). When one notice that different power levels exist in society’s M-F scripts, the limitations of sex-role theory become pretty apparent. Feminist scholars were quick to point it out in the 70’s and 80’s, which compelled progressive sociologists to rethink their assumptions. While Gray was making his transition from the world of the Maharishi to Mars and Venus in the 80’s, several sociologists were realizing that sex-role theory was much too rigid for real life (Foulis and McCabe, 1997).

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research Design

This study is about the dynamics of sexual vulnerabilities occurred by the dominant management personalities and the tea community’s vulnerability towards it in terms of attitudinal and behavioral practices. It investigates particularly rootless ethnic tea garden community’s vulnerability to their basic rights and their varied coping strategies regarding customary practices. A quantitative oriented qualitative mixed method has been applied for this study. This exploratory research utilized survey method of quantitative methodology through interview schedule to collect data.

### 3.2. Population and Sampling

The persons who is living in Shatchari tea garden under Chunarughat Upazila, Habiganj are considered as population for this study. This study specifies the persons oppressed by the management personalities of the Tea garden as the unit of analysis. Non-probability sampling approach was followed for conducting survey for the quantitative part of this study. Particularly purposive sampling procedure was adopted to draw sample for the survey. As mentioned earlier, this study was conducted at a garden and the unit of analysis was each female labour and male labour. Its total labor population is approximately 4500. It is consisted of 5 labour lines. The total number of households of labour line in this garden is 1602. The total number of laborers under study area is not fixed and it is not possible to count all these laborers as the sampling frame out of which the required number of samples was drawn. The sample size was estimated through an approach based on confidence level and precision rate. Accordingly, attempts were taken to identify the sampled respondents in the labour line with the help of local gatekeepers. Finally, 100 respondents were taken as the representative part of the population and considered for study.

### 3.3. Geographical Features

The study focuses the tea community's sexual vulnerability occurred by the authorities. The study was conducted in one of the most isolated ignorant gardens of Habiganj namely Shatchari tea garden under Amtoli union of Chunarughat Upazilla of Habiganj District. This garden covers an area of 250 square kilometer.

### 3.4. Data Collection

The decision of using quantitative methods of data collection was because of its appropriateness for examining different facets of the phenomena under study. The most common example of this is the recognition by survey researchers that the formulation of questions for questionnaires or interview schedule is benefited by using quantitative methods to understand how respondents are likely to interpret questions. For conducting survey, a structured interview schedule was developed. The interview schedule included six parts with 46 close-ended questions containing the information on:

- Socio-demographic characteristics
- Socio economic circumstances
- Experience of physical and sexual Harassment
- Cultural Dynamics of sexual vulnerability.
- Coping strategies of Female Tea Workers
- Risk of HIV / AIDS

The fieldwork for present study was conducted during June and November, 2017. There were 4 interviewers responsible for data collection from sampled labor lines. The 2 field interviewers were recruited from the Department of Sociology, University of Dhaka and 2 female interviewers were recruited from Habiganj NGO sectors. All of them were graduate student and had the experience of conducting survey-interview. Besides, they were trained on the data collection mechanism, the art of data collection and briefed comprehensively on the data collection instruments would be used. After getting the training interviewers went to the field. The researcher himself along with other 4 interviewers 2 male and 2 female interviewers administered the survey among the respondents according to the sampling plan set out earlier. Before approaching the sample respondents, the interviewers informed them about the purpose of this study, topics under study and the need for collecting data. The data collection team then sought their cooperation and formal permission to administer survey.

### 3.5. Data Processing and Analysis

The research has involved a great deal of descriptive analysis in line with a study at providing a holistic synthesis that can explain the trends observed in data. The statistical procedures used for analyzing data are those adequate for descriptive purposes. The analysis follows a general scheme of simple description at bivariate level. Data were analyzed in two stages using SPSS software version 20. Differences were tested by Cramer's V.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

In this study, 7 selected characteristics of the farmers were selected for investigation. The characteristics were age, marital status, literacy, education level, family size, radio use, level of radio exposure, and mount of usable materials. The salient features of the different characteristics have been presented in Table 1.

**Table-1.** Salient Features of the Demographic Characteristics of the Tea Workers

Characteristics	Scoring system	Range		Categories	Respondents	
		Possible Score	Observed Score		No.	(%)
1.Age	Years	Unknown	18-65	Young ( $\leq 35$ )	34	34
				Middle (36-50)	49	49
				Old ( $>51$ )	14	14
2.Marital status	Count	Unknown	15-37	Married (male)	10	10
				Married (female)	37	37
				Divorced	6	6
				Widowed	32	32
				Widower	15	15
2. Literacy	Rated score	Unknown	0-13	Yes	15	15
				No	85	85
3. Education level	Year	Unknown	2-85	Primary	9	9
				Secondary	4	4
				Higher secondary	2	2
				Not desired	85	85

4. Family size	Number	Unknown	3-14	Small (up to 4) Medium (5-6) Large (>6)	33 25 42	33 25 42
5. Radio use	Rated score	Unknown	26-74	Yes No	26 74	26 74
6. Level of Radio exposure	Rated score	Unknown	3-74	Everyday At least once a week Less than once a week Not desired	3 22 1 74	3 22 1 74
7. Amount of usable materials	USD	Unknown	1-77	Cycle Chair/table Bed	1 22 77	1 22 77

Source: Survey, 2017

Majority 75 (75%) of the tea workers are female and 25 (25%) of the respondents are male. The respondents who are between 35 and 45 years old are the topmost in number as 36 (36%) and those respondents who are between 15 and 25 years old are the lowest in number as 10 (10%). Married female respondents are the topmost as 37 (37%) and divorced respondents are the lowest as 6 (6%). Only 15(15%) of the respondents are literate and 85 (85%) of the respondents are not literate. While 2(2%) of the respondents get higher secondary education and only 9 (9%) of the respondents get primary education. 42(42%) of the respondents have above 6 family members and 25 (25%) of the respondents have family members between 3 and 6. Only 26(26%) of the respondents tend to radio exposure and 74 (74%) of the respondents do not to radio. While 22(22%) of the respondents hear radio at least once a week and 1 (1%) of the respondents hear radio less than once a week. Only 5 (5%) of the respondents watch TV and 95 (95%) of the respondents do not watch TV which is a threat for unconscious community. Only 1 (1%) of the respondents has Cycle and 77 (77%) of the respondents has bed as their amount of usable materials.

#### 4.2. Socio-Economic Circumstances of the Respondents

Majority (29%) of the respondents are in lack of pure drinking water while (3%) of the respondents have faced side effects of insecticides used in the garden (Table 2).

Table-2. Distribution of the Respondents by Facing Problems

Socio-economic indicators	Socio-economic sub-indicators	Frequency	Percent
Facing Problems	Irregular electricity	19	19.0
	Lack of pure drinking water	29	29.0
	Lack of educational facilities	13	13.0
	Lack of health treatment	8	8.0
	Unhygienic latrine	21	21.0
	Lack of regular salary and ration	7	7.0
	Side effects of insecticides used in the garden	3	3.0
Degree of Satisfaction	Very much dissatisfied	75	75.0
	Somewhat dissatisfied	12	12.0
	Very much satisfied	4	4.0
	Somewhat satisfied	9	9.0
Physical Harassment	Yes	78	78.0
	No	22	22.0
Types of Physical Harassment	Erotic scold	15	15.0
	Force	10	10.0
	Molestation	5	5.0
	Physical harassment,	22	22.0
	Sexual harassment	14	14.0
	Rape	7	7.0
	Try to kill after rape	5	5.0
	Not desired	22	22.0
Types of Oppressor	Manager of the garden	9	9.0
	Tila Babu	45	45.0
	Sarder	10	10.0
	Chaukidar	3	3.0
	Terrorist group	3	3.0
	Outsider	2	2.0
	Male laborers	6	6.0
	Not desired	22	22.0

Source: Survey, 2017.

Majority (75%) of the respondents are very much dissatisfied while 4 (4%) of the respondents are satisfied with their working environment. Only 22 (22%) of the respondents have not recognized of any harassment and 78 (78%) of the respondents have recognized of physical harassment which means majority of the tea workers are inhumanely victimized by the management authority. Only 5 (5%) of the respondents have told that they have observed of trying to kill after rape and 22 (22%) of the respondents have told they have observed of physical harassment. Only 6 (6%) of the respondents have observed harassment occurred by male laborers while 45 (45%) of the respondents have observed harassment occurred by Tila Babu.

### 4.3. Experiences of Physical and Sexual Harassment

Majority (32%) of the respondents have told that harassment of the tea workers is generally committed by garden *Tila Babu* while 1 (1%) of the respondents have told that harassment of the tea workers is generally occurred by outsider. Only 25 (25%) of the respondents have not recognized any personal experience of torture and 52 (52%) of the respondents have recognized that they are inhumanely tortured (Table 3). Among them 18 (18%) of the respondents have been raped while 4 (4%) of the respondents have recognized that after being raped they were endangered in front of death.

**Table-3.** Distribution of the Respondents by their Attitudes to Generally Convicted Oppressors

Physical & sexual harassment indicators	Sub-indicators	Frequency	Percent
Types of Oppressor	Manager of the garden	14	14.0
	Tila Babu	32	32.0
	Sarder	18	18.0
	Chaukidar	6	6.0
	Terrorist group	2	2.0
	Outsider	1	1.0
	Male laborers	1	1.0
	Not desired	26	26.0
Experience of Torture	Yes	52	52.0
	No	25	25.0
	Not desired	23	23.0
Type of Oppression	Erotic scold	11	11.0
	Force	5	5.0
	Molestation	10	10.0
	Physical harassment	5	5.0
	Sexual harassment	17	17.0
	Rape	18	18.0
	Try to kill after rape	4	4.0
	Not desired	30	30.0
Oppressor's position	Manager of the garden	16	16.0
	Tila Babu	26	26.0
	Sarder	12	12.0
	Chaukidar	2	2.0
	Terrorist group	11	11.0
	Outsider	2	2.0
	Male laborers	1	1.0
	Not desired	30	30.0

Source: Survey, 2017.

From the above table, it is clear that 1 (1%) of the respondents is victimized by male laborers and 26 (26%) of the respondents are victimized by Tila Babu.

### 4.4. Cultural Dynamics of Sexual Vulnerability

From the above table, it is clear that 8 (8%) of the respondents have regarded for not being Muslim and 41 (41%) of the respondents have regarded lack of sufficient security as causes of their harassment (Table 4). From the above table, it is clear that 11 (11%) of the respondents have recognized of torture in labor line and 60 (60%) of the respondents have denied any type of tortures.



**Table-4.** Distribution of the Respondents by Causes of Harassment

Cultural Dynamics of Sexual Vulnerability Indicators	Sub-Indicators	Frequency	Percent
Causes of harassment	Being aborigines	10	10.0
	Consider inferior for not being Muslim	8	8.0
	Lack of sufficient security	41	41.0
	Not desired	41	41.0
Torture in labor lines	Yes	11	11.0
	No	60	60.0
	Not desired	29	29.0

Source: Survey, 2017.

#### 4.5. Coping Strategies of Female Tea Workers

From the above table, it is clear that 47 (47%) of the respondents have protested against the oppressors and 6 (6%) of the respondents do not know about protests. From the above table, it is clear that 79 (79%) of the respondents have told that there is no NGO in garden and 21 (21%) of the respondents have told that they are not acquainted with NGOs (Table 5).

**Table-5.** Distribution of the Respondents by Their Collective Protests

Coping Strategies Indicators	Response	Frequency	Percent
Protest	Yes	47	47.0
	No	45	45.0
	Don't know	6	6.0
	Not desired	2	2.0
NGOs Co-operation	No	79	79.0
	Don't know	21	21.0
Personal Protests types	Yes	29	29.0
	No	42	42.0
	Not desired	29	29.0
Help for Personal Protest from various sources	Complaint to the leaders of Tea Union	22	22.0
	Didn't join in work with other workers	17	17.0
	Others	4	4.0
	Not desired	57	57.0

Source: Survey, 2017

From the above table, it is clear that only 29 (29%) of the respondents personally protested against the harassment and 42 (42%) of the respondents does not protest against harassment. Only 4 (4%) of the respondents protested by others activities and 22 (22%) of the respondents protested by complaining to the leaders of tea union.

#### 4.6. Risk of HIV/AIDS

Majority (72%) of the respondents have not yet heard about HIV/AIDS while only 8 (8%) of the respondents have heard about HIV/AIDS. Among them, 9 (9%) of the respondents do not think themselves at risk of HIV/AIDS and 70 (70%) of the respondents are totally ignorant about risk of HIV/AIDS (Table 6).

**Table-6.** Distribution of the Respondents by knowledge of HIV/AIDS

Risk of HIV/AIDS indicators	Response	Frequency	Percent
Knowledge of HIV/AIDS	Yes	8	8.0
	No	72	72.0
	Don't know	18	18.0
	Not desired	2	2.0
Knowledge of Risk of HIV/AIDS	No	9	9.0
	Don't know	70	70.0
	Not desired	21	21.0
Knowledge of Sexual Disease	No	41	41.0
	Don't know	36	36.0
	Not desired	23	23.0
Usage of Condoms	Yes	1	1.0
	No	82	82.0
	Don't know	11	11.0
	Not desired	6	6.0

Causes of not usage condom	Don't like	37	37.0
	Partner didn't like	20	20.0
	Both didn't like	24	24.0
	Not available	1	1.0
	Not comfortable	1	1.0
	Religious cause	1	1.0
	Use other method	1	1.0
	Not desired	15	15.0

Source: Survey, 2017.

The above table shows a dangerous level of tea workers about knowledge of sexual diseases where 36 (36%) of the respondents are totally ignorant about knowledge of sexual diseases and 41 (41%) of the respondents are not aware of knowledge of sexual diseases. Only 11 (11%) of the respondents are not introduced with condoms and 82 (82%) of the respondents do not use condom. From the above table, it is clear that 37 (37%) of the respondents do not like usage of condom and 1 (1%) of the respondents does not feel comfortable about usage of condom.

#### 4.7. Relationship Among Various Factors

The analysis reveals that hypothesis (a) of this research is lack of self-awareness increases mass exploitation among tea garden worker which Cramer's V. is 0.093 and P.V. 0.832. It shows that it has no significance between lack of self-awareness and mass exploitation. In the above table it is clear that hypothesis (b) of this research is hegemonial attitude makes a confined risky environment especially for female tea workers which Cramer's V is 0.582 and P.V is 0.000 (Table 7). It shows that it has significance between hegemonial attitude and risky environment.

Table-7. Relationship Between Variables

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables		
	Lack of Self-Awareness	Hegemonial Attitude	Less Protest or Taking Action
Mass exploitation	Cramer's V. = 0.093 P.V = 0.832 *	NA	NA
Risky environment	NA	Cramer's V = 0.582 P.V = 0.000**	NA
Sexual vulnerability	NA	NA	Cramer's V = 0.120 P.V = 0.652 *

Note: Here, NA = Not Applicable, \* = No significance, \*\* = Significance

In the above table, it is clear that hypothesis (c) of this research is sexual vulnerability which is more likely related with less protest or acting which Cramer's v is 0.120 and P.V is 0.652. It shows that it has no significance between sexual vulnerability and less protest.

### 5. Discussion

In tea estates, irregular electricity, lack of pure drinking water, lack of educational facilities, lack of health treatment, unhygienic latrine, lack of regular salary and ration are major features of tea garden. Approximately, 75% of the respondents are very much dissatisfied with tea gardens situation. The majority (78%) of the respondents have recognized of sexual or physical torture. Nearly 32% of the respondents have convicted Tila babu for committing oppression. Nearly 52% of the respondents who are victimized personally and 18% of them have been raped. Nearly 41% of the respondents have said that they are being victimized for lacking of sufficient security or irresponsibility of law enforcing agencies. When respondents are asked about their personal protest against the oppressor, in the time of their personal harassment, 42% of the respondents have told that they did not protest. One important objective of this study was to investigate the vulnerability of male and female tea workers in terms of HIV/AIDS. Only 8% of respondents have heard about HIV/AIDS. The majority (77%) of the respondents have no knowledge about sexual disease. Nearly same results are also applicable to usage of condoms. The hypotheses (b) is hegemonial attitude makes a confined risky environment for female tea workers is tested positively where Cramer's v is 0.582 and P. Value is 0.000. As if P value is behind 0.05, 2<sup>nd</sup> hypothesis's P. value is appropriately proved.

Marxist feminism connects the oppression of women to Marxist ideas about exploitation, oppression and labor. These theorists see women as being held down as a result of their unequal standing in both the workplace and the domestic sphere. Marxist Feminists see the need to work alongside not just men, but all other groups, as they see the oppression of women as a part of a larger pattern that affects everyone involved in the capitalist system. Marx felt that when class oppression was overcome, gender oppression would vanish as well. According to Marxist feminists, this view of gender oppression as a sub-class of class oppression is naïve and much of the work of socialist feminists has gone towards separating gender phenomena from class phenomena. Because Marxist theory has little room for issues dealing directly with woman's reproductive and sexual concern (contraception, sterilization, and abortion; pornography prostitution, sexual harassment, rape, and woman battering), many Marxist feminists initially focused on women's work-related concerns. They elucidated, for example, how the institution of the family is related to capitalism, how women's domestic work is trivialized as riot real work, and how women are generally given the

most boring and low-paying jobs. As we shall see, even if the nature and function of woman's work are not complete explanations for gender oppression, they are "very convincing partial ones". Juliet Mitchell combined a materialist, or economic, account of capitalism with a largely nonmaterialist, or ideological, account of patriarchy. She said a Marxist revolution aimed at destroying class society must be combined with a specifically feminist revolution aimed at destroying the sex/gender system. In her book *Women's Estate*, Mitchell abandoned the traditional Marxist feminist position according to which woman's condition is simply a function of her relation to capital, of whether or not she is part of the productive workforce. In place of this monocausal explanation for woman's oppression, she suggested woman's status and function are multiply determined by her role in production, reproduction, the socialization of children, and sexuality. Mitchell noted that even though women are just as physically and psychologically qualified for high-paying, prestigious jobs as men are, employers continue to confine women to low-paying, low-status jobs. Furthermore, although women have far fewer children now than they did at the turn of the century, they spend no less time socializing them. Still Mitchell thought 1970s women had made significant progress in "foe area of sexuality", thanks largely to the efforts of radical feminists. Mitchell nevertheless cautioned that, pushed to extremes, women's newly won sexual liberation could mutate into a form of sexual oppression. Whereas traditional society generally condemned sexually promiscuous women as "wanton whores", instead of branding sexually liberated women with scarlet letters, contemporary society offers them up as healthy role models for those women it regards as sexually repressed. If contemporary society views any group of women as unhealthy, implied Mitchell, it is probably virgins. No wonder, then, that women who view sex as a part though certainly not the whole of a meaningful life start to feel abnormal. Commenting on this state of affairs, Mitchell observed that too much sex, like too little sex, can be oppressive. In this research Marxist feminism is fitted as well as tested, because Marxist feminism specifically focuses on women's torture and vulnerability. In this study survey, 75% of the respondents are very much dissatisfied with scarce opportunity. Nearly 78% of the respondents have recognized that physical torture as well as harassment is available in tea estates.

## 5. Conclusion

This explorative study is based on quantitative method of data collections. The broad objective of this study is to explore and explain the dynamics of sexual vulnerability of female tea garden workers in Bangladesh. This study has described this issue as clear as possible. The majority (52%) of the respondents are tortured or harassed in garden and among them 26% of the tortured respondents have convicted Tila babu. Tea workers are totally isolated from the information world as well as awareness of anything. Only 26% of the total respondents have slight radio exposure. And surprisingly 1% of the respondents hear radio less than once a week. Many new issues are found in this research such as 5% of the respondents watch TV less than once a week. Marxist feminist theory has been regarded as appropriate for conducting this monograph well. Feminist political activists have been concerned with issues such as a women's right to bodily integrity and autonomy for protection from domestic violence; against sexual harassment and rape as well as workplace rights. Marxist thinkers indicate that all exploitations domination is occurred because of class inequality and class discrimination. Because Marxist theory has little room for issues dealing directly with women's reproductive and sexual concerns, many Marxist feminists initially focused on women's work-related concerns. The major initiatives should be taken by the concerned authorities to uplift the livelihood and minimize the socio-economic and sexual vulnerabilities like opportunities provided in tea garden for workers should be maximized, ration and salary given to tea workers as weekly wage should be enhanced, responsibility & accountability of tea management authorities ought to be tightly observed so that they can not think themselves as god of tea estate, special trained security personnel should be recruited for instant punishment for any further dehumanization occurred by garden manager and other concerned authorities, sexual oppressors should be brought under law of courts as women tea workers are very essential for plucking tea leaves, the safety of their work movement should be ensured as soon as possible, the government should make remarkable instance by giving punishment those convicted persons of tea garden authorities through introducing an Inter tea garden's Investigation Commission and increasing accessibility of NGOs.

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